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FROM: Kika de la Garza

Washington, D C

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, U S A ! Independence Day is always something special to Americans and this year it is more than usually special. Our Nation's 200th birthday deserves to be celebrated with fireworks and fanfare. Communities in South Texas and all over the country are observing the Bicentennial with historical pageants, parades, exhibits of Americana, and a host of other events designed for both education and entertainment. That is as it should be.

The American Revolution was not simply an event that had its official beginning with the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The Revolution could not even be regarded as the climax of a series of events. It was a bold adventure into the unknown, the product of ideals, creativity and common sense that found expression in both the words and deeds of the Founding Fathers.

A more perfect union was the goal they sought. In their seeking they took an unprecedented risk. Not the risk of rebellion, for there have been many rebellions in the history of mankind. Rather it was the risk of creating a new kind of government, a government under which the people would be both sovereign and subject, simultaneously the rulers and the ruled. The risk they took was that of uniting persons of diverse races and religious convictions, persons of unequal education, wealth, intelligence and background, under a form of government that would treat all alike.

A strong foundation is required for an imposing building if it is to endure for a long time. This is true also of a great nation. Our country's foundation was laid 200 years ago by men and women of vision and fortitude, men possessed of determination to be free. With a capacity for unity, discipline and sacrifice, they forged this structure of freedom that stands strong and proud today. The American Revolution did not end in 1789 with the ratification of the Constitution of the United States. The spirit and principles of the Revolution remain to inspire us.

As we celebrate, we should be concerned not only with marking the birth of our nation but also with commemorating the ideas and values which motivated those men who presided over its birth. The Bicentennial offers an unparalleled opportunity for Americans to examine the origins of our laws, the underlying structure of our institutions and the achievements of those who came before us. Only if we understand our past can we intelligently plan for the future.

During these 200 years our Nation has experienced extraordinary growth, challenge and change. We have dreamed of and worked for a better national life and a world with more justice, more peace with freedom, more brotherhood and more liberty for all. During this Bicentennial year and in the future we must press forward in our continuing search to form that more perfect union envisioned two centuries ago by men who were both

idealistic and practical.

Happy Birthday, America!

* * *

THE FARM CENSUS, which dates back to 1840, is taken every five years to obtain agricultural data of value to government, business and industry. The next Census is scheduled for 1979. House Committee hearings were held recently on a bill that would make radical changes in the method of conducting it. And some changes are needed, according to complaints I received from South Texas farmers about the 1974 Census.

Some 13 million forms and letters were sent to 4.1 million persons. The forms were very complex and a large percentage of farmers failed to fill them out. Farmers who were slow in answering Census questionnaires got stiff reminders about criminal penalties. Besides, much of the data was obsolete by the time it was published and could be misleading. One analyst of the 1974 Farm Census said it failed to count 8.5 million head of cattle on 298,000 farms. The result was faulty information about the livestock economy, which caused a glut on the market and financial hardship for many cattle producers.

The proposed changes in the system would move responsibility from the Census Bureau to the Statistical Reporting Service of the Agriculture Department. Sophisticated sampling systems would take the place of mass mailings. The Statistical Reporting Service, working in cooperation with the states, has on hand trained personnel who could conduct the Farm Census on a sample person-to-person basis. A relatively small number of farmers would be interviewed. And millions of government forms would be abolished.

* * *

FOOD COSTS take only 15 percent of the income of Americans. That figure compares with 26 percent in France, 35 to 40 percent in Russia, 39 percent in Yugoslavia, 47 percent in Brazil and a whopping 68 percent in India. The high productivity of our farmers is a major factor. They are the most efficient in the world and we should do everything possible to continue with the incentives to keep them so.

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME: Visiting my office from home this week were Mr and Mrs Gene Garrison of Alice; Mrs Jeanne Cox, Robert, Kathy, and George of Brownsville; Mr Mike Wallace of Edinburg; Mr Robert Clark, Ike, and Gwen, and Mr and Mrs Bob Hetrick, Katherine, and Jeff, and Mr and Mrs Duane Smith and Traci, all of Harlingen; Mr J D Phaup of Kingsville; Mr and Mrs Winston Jenkins of McAllen; Mrs Gregorio Hernandez and Ricky of Mercedes; Mr and Mrs Rodolfo de la Garza and Rodolfo Jr of Mission; Mimi Correa of Raymondville; and Mr and Mrs Donald Hougland, Denise, Douglas, and David, formerly of Weslaco, now of Stafford,

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